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ANNUAL REPORT

1932

GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARK

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General Grant National Park, California.

GENERAL

A steady improvement in general conditions affecting visitors has been made during the travel year, more especially in camping conditions, but evidenced as well in other activities and features of the park. The opening of the Grant Park section of the Generals' Highway, 2.4 miles in length, was the outstanding feature of road construction, and the elimination of the narrow, crooked grade below Park Headquarters, formerly the principal means of access to the park, has been of material benefit, especially for winter visitors.

Summer travel to the various scenic points of Park Ridge, by way of the Rocking Rock Road, was facilitated by continued widening and oiling of the old grade where not too steep, and construction of a short new grade to eliminate short, steep pitches.

The old trail system of the park has at last been fully opened out and improved, adding much to the beauty of a stay in the park, as well as providing an important addition to the fire protection improvements. Missing links in the north, west and southwest firebreaks under construction the past few years have been roughed out and put in shape for final finishing by the time of need in the spring of 1933, with probable burning of brush, cleared from the lines, this fall.

One new camping area, with all modern sanitary facilities, was opened, and continued improvement in grounds and equipment made on other areas. A very fine educational campfire unit has been added to the attractions of the park, and heavily patronized.

Insect control work has progressed as funds were provided, but threat of invasion from the northwest and west has not been decreased, although checked near the border to a great extent.

WEATHER

The winter of 1931-1932 was the heaviest on record for many years, and generally considered to be the most severe since the record season of 1905 - 1906. Snowfall was very heavy. An unusual amount of rain fell during the snowy months, one of the severe storms of snow being immediately followed by nearly four inches of rain. Damage to buildings from excessive weight of icy snow was imminent on several occasions, and some loss of roofs on lighter structures was occasioned by the strain. The total snowfall for the season was 365 inches, or 30 feet 5 inches, with added precipitation in form of rain amounting to 5.71 inches, bringing the total fall of moisture to 54.14 inches. Precipitation for the corresponding period last year amounted to only 29.09 inches. Early indications were not encouraging for a heavy

winter, as October precipitation was light; but three heavy storms in November put six feet of snow upon the ground, and the following months kept up the good work.

TRAVEL

Recorded travel for the year suffered a heavy slump, owing to practical closing of the park during the winter, and generally unfavorable weather and financial conditions for much of the time when travel is usually heaviest. A total of 12,773 cars, carrying 40,806 visitors, was recorded, as against 16,245 cars and 51,995 people last year.

The recorded decrease for the travel year amounts to 21.2%, with unsatisfactory conditions of personnel noted last year still cutting heavily into actual travel as compared with that of record.

Totals covering use of developed campgrounds include 782 cars, and 2,592 campers, a decrease of 42.9% over last year's figures. Many parties remain for lengthy periods among the pines and firs which form the forest cover of the park camping areas.

Out of state travel was shown as 278 cars and 874 people for the year, representing 44 states and territories and 3 foreign countries.

PROTECTION

Few violations and no fires during the season may be taken as indications that educational work, backed by intensive patrol, is productive of results in protecting the park. No large fires in forests adjoining were had this year, and hence no danger from outside was in evidence.

BUILDINGS

Two units of laborers' quarters were completed by the middle of the season, each of two rooms.

PARK ROADS

The Grant Park unit of the Generals' Highway, opened July 27, after moderate oiling and roadside cleanup, is a major improvement of extreme importance, doing away with the necessity of travel over poor and crooked grades practically impossible of complete clearing in winter, and unsatisfactory at other times. A joint celebration of the opening, combined with that of a ten mile section of the connecting Kings River State Highway, was held at Indian Basin August 28, with prominent State and Federal officials in attendance. New construction within the park totals 2.4 miles. Continued improvement, reconstruction and oiling of the Rocking Rock Road, 2.6 miles, has reduced the maximum on this important road to less than 12% grade, as compared with more than 21% formerly encountered, and increased travel to Park Ridge, with much favorable comment, attests the reaction of visitors to this much needed improvement.

PARK TRAILS

Continued improvement of old trails, with minor new construction, have finally opened the last of the old trails, increased safety from fire and provided desirable means for nature study, horseback riding and other trips. New construction provided a means of access to the Dead Giant, a huge sequoia killed by girdling by unknown persons many years ago.

FIRE PREVENTION

The Lookout at the cooperative tower, Park and Forest Services, on Park Ridge was held at his post until the end of November this year, owing to extreme fire hazard due to the late season. Program covering opening of old roads for fire protection is completed with exception of final smoothing of grades, postponed until spring of 1933 to avoid duplication of work. Close inspection by patrol ranger, with instruction of campers and others, is maintained.

WILD LIFE

Deer and other wild animals have been in excellent condition since the heavy winter increased the stream and spring flow, with wide distribution of water and ample feed. Predatory animals, with the exception of coyotes, have been very few, and no damage noted. Birds numerous as usual and watering in large numbers at the fountain in front of Assistant Superintendent's quarters, where they attract interested attention.

CAMP DEVELOPMENT

With the opening of the new Cedar Springs campground, with comfort station, hot and cold showers and extended water system to camp sites, 96 new camp tables with cupboard attached were distributed here and in other campgrounds formerly equipped in part only. The major part of the allotment for camp purposes will be used in early work in the spring of 1933. This season's improvements included 3 cooking furnaces for picnic grounds, proving very popular, and more of these, with additional tables, will be provided.

NATURALIST AND MUSEUM SERVICE

Under direction of Ranger Naturalist Basil E. Jamison, this educational and recreational service has been very successful; 42 field trips, with an attendance of 1,235, were made for the season, with an estimated attendance at 36 campfire programs of 13,910 persons.

NATION'S CHRISTMAS TREE CEREMONY

Despite a very heavy snow storm and roads in very poor condition, especially upon the approach to the park, the seventh annual observance of this ceremony was held some two hours later than scheduled on Christmas Day. A very fine program was given in the falling snow, and 49 cars carrying 240 people braved the elements to attend. Continued heavy snow blocked the Grant Grove road for the season that night, there being 71 inches, or 5 feet 11 inches, of snow upon the ground at the time of ceremony.

INSECT CONTROL WORK

This work, including treatment of 40 sugar pines, was carried on in the spring of 1932, with some work as late as August. An attempt is being made to check invasion of bark beetles from badly infested areas adjoining the park upon the north and west. Fall work will be handled with probable increase in much needed funds.